

SD
146
Q3
P592

Commission of Conservation
CANADA

COMMITTEE ON FORESTS

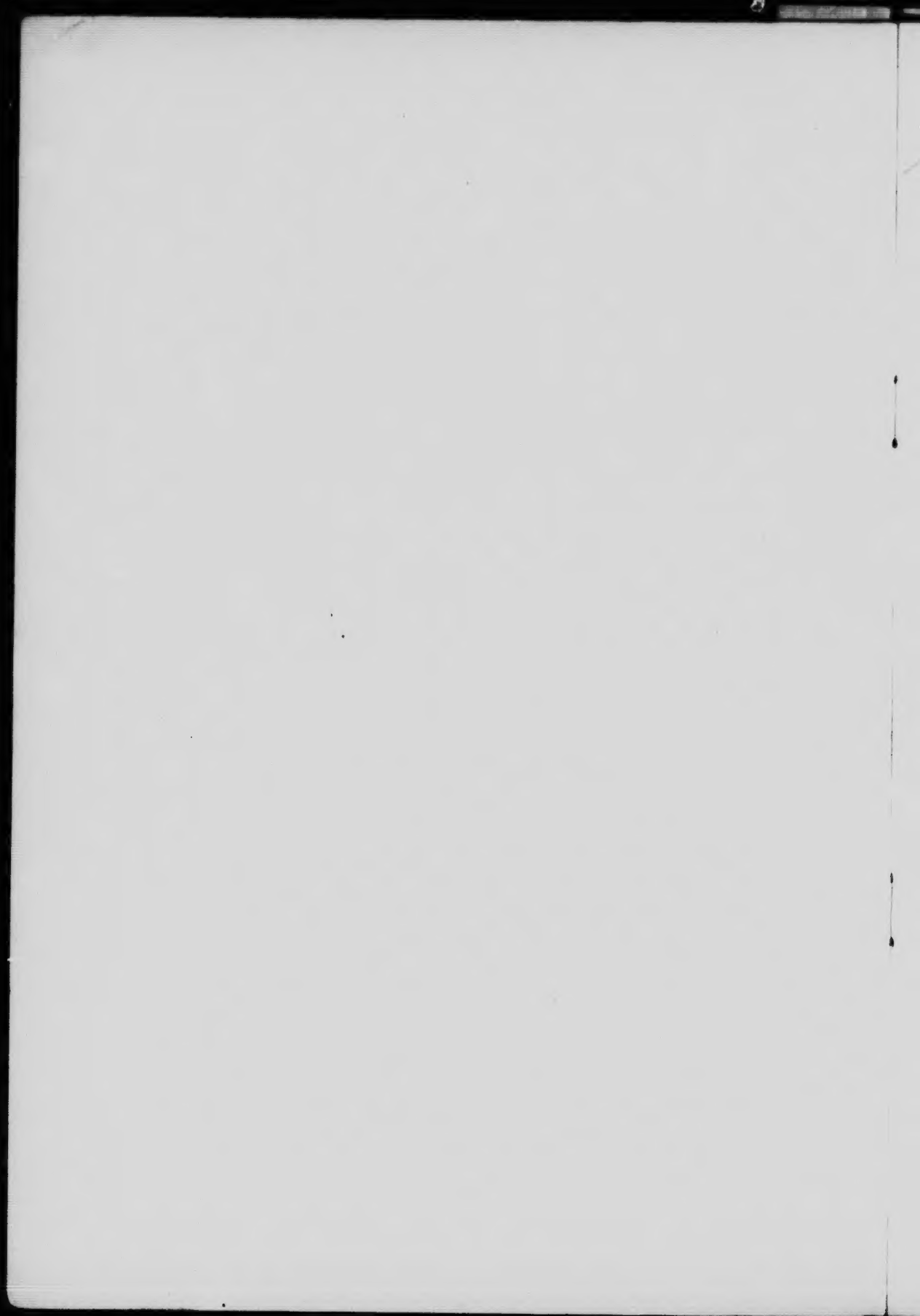
M 75

FORESTRY SITUATION IN
QUEBEC

By
G. C. PICHÉ
Chief, Forest Service, Quebec

Reprinted from the Sixth Annual Report of the
Commission of Conservation

OTTAWA—1915



Forestry Situation in Quebec

THE Forest Service of Quebec was reorganized in 1909 by the Hon. Jules Allard, Minister of Lands and Forests. It received more extensive and more definite powers, and a vote of \$35,000 was placed at our disposal. At that time, the personnel was composed of two forest engineers, three civil engineers, fifteen student assistants, and some eighty rangers, explorers, etc. In 1915, we have a staff of twenty forest engineers, two civil engineers, fifteen expert scalers or special agents, and eighty forest rangers, explorers or guides, and the vote has reached \$100,000. As you will notice, the number of non-technical men has remained stationary, whereas quite a number of experts have been added to the force. This was the weakness of the former service; as, to approach the lumbermen, to discuss with them the methods of exploitation of their limits, and to give decisions where difficulties arise, qualified men are necessary, who must be clothed with more authority than is usually given to an ordinary ranger.

Work of Forest School

In order to recruit such men, it was necessary to provide for a forest school, which was established in 1910, at Quebec. The students there take a three years' course and work in the ranks of the Provincial forest service during their holidays, so that, when they graduate, they are familiar with our conditions and with the task they are called upon to perform. The results of this system have been very good. Out of twenty-six forest engineers who have graduated from the Laval forest school, we employ eighteen, the others having secured employment with some of the lumbering concerns in Quebec, or are working on their own account. I may mention that one of our men is now in charge of the Arboricultural Branch of the Department of Agriculture of Quebec, whilst another is one of the engineers in the Quebec Department of Roads.

Now that we have succeeded in recruiting a technical personnel of some value, we expect to devote our attention to the training of forest rangers, who would be of value, not only to the Government but also to the lumbermen; and, before long, we expect to establish

a school for rangers. To complete this educational movement, we would have liked to have some of our men lecture in the different centres, but this may not be done for a few years, as at present there are other subjects demanding attention.

**Ownership of
Quebec Forests** As you are aware, the province of Quebec has a total forest area of some 130 million acres, of which 45 million acres have been leased to the limit-holders, five million acres belong to private individuals, and the remainder, some 80 million acres, is in virgin forest.

We have had very little to do yet with the management of the private lands, but we know that there are many reforms that should be made, and it is one of the problems that will be considered in the near future. We would like to establish a system of co-operation with the private holders so as to place their wood-lots under a permanent system of exploitation. At the present time, our activities in this field have been limited to the re-forestation of waste lands and I may say that this movement has aroused a good deal of interest in the province. The demands for young trees are now coming in greater number each year, so that we have had to increase the capacity of our forest nursery at Berthierville.

**Danger from
Speculation** To protect our timber lands from the encroachment of land speculators under cover of colonization, we have to maintain an active watch over the lots sold each year. As soon as we have collected sufficient proof that the occupation of the land is not *bona fide*, a report is made asking for the cancellation of the sale. Often our action is completed by the collection of heavy fines imposed upon the timber which has been cut by trespassers. This rigid control has caused a diminution in the number of lots sold each year, but we believe that a better class of settlers has come to the front, knowing that they would be encouraged and protected against the land speculator.

**Classification
of Lands** During the past year much time has been devoted to the classification of lands, nearly 500,000 acres being so examined. One of the causes of bad lumbering in certain sections of our province has been the uncertainty of the limit holders whether their limits would vanish under the attacks of land speculators, resulting in a sort of a race between the lot-seeker and the limit-holder, the latter trying to cut the timber as quickly as possible in order to forestall any efforts of the former to secure it. By a rigid inspection of the lots and a thorough classification of the townships, these elements of disturbance have now disappeared and the lumbering is taking a more steady course.

On the south shore of the St. Lawrence, we have even succeeded in creating reserves in which no sale of lots will take place within ten years. We did not contend for a longer period as we are certain that, within this time, public sentiment will be sufficiently educated to allow us to continue this policy without any difficulty.

**Explorations of
Virgin Forests**

The Forest Service has been charged also with the exploration of vacant lands and, last year, our men made reconnaissances over some 8,000 square miles of territory. The information gathered has allowed us to offer some of these lands to the public, as timber limits, and a sale was made last October. Notwithstanding the disturbances caused by the war, the average price, per square mile, was much higher than any former sale.

**Control of
Lumbering
Operations**

Our control of the lumbering operation has been successful, thanks to the hearty co-operation of the limit-holders. In the pulp and paper districts there is absolutely no reproach to be made to the operators, as the stumps are cut low, the tops are small, etc. ; in fact, the lumbering is more conservative than we dared to recommend in 1909. To encourage this good movement, and also to reduce the dangers of fire by minimizing the amount of *débris*, the Hon. Mr. Allard, Minister of Lands and Forests, has decided to give a rebate of 50 per cent off the stumpage dues, for all logs less than six inches in diameter at the small end. Many lumbering companies have established a forestry branch of their own, or have appointed a certain number of inspectors, to control their logging operations and are co-operating with the provincial service to the fullest extent.

Much attention is now paid to the rapid exploitation of windfalls and of fire-killed and insect-killed trees. The Government gives a reduction of stumpage in each case to stimulate the removal of these trees before they are too much damaged.

**Technical Work
to be Undertaken**

In the domain of forest entomology and mycology we have not done very much ; first, because of the lack of technical assistance, and, secondly, on account of pressure of other work. We are trying to correct this deficiency as quickly as possible and two of our young foresters are specializing in these important studies. Though our forests have not suffered very much of late from the attacks of insects, we have to deplore the decline in the reproduction of balsam fir, and, in some places, of spruce, as a result of the defoliations by the spruce-bud worm. The forest tent caterpillar has been very active during the last three summers, but, thanks to the Dominion Bureau of Ento-

mology, our farmers have been instructed respecting preventive measures which will soon check this insect.

**Reforestation of
Waste Lands**

In many sections of Quebec, we find farms where the light soil, uncovered by undue clearing or impoverished by a wrong system of cultivation, has become transformed into drifting sand, which has extended upon the adjoining lands. The sandy wave buries the good soils, and, if not checked, results in very serious losses. As found by the French foresters, who succeeded in reclaiming the immense sand dunes of the Gascogne district in France, the best method to deal with this problem is to establish, first, a temporary cover with beach grass, then later, to plant with appropriate trees. We started similar work three years ago at Lachute, and we have now 150 acres sown in beach grass and about 50 more completely reclaimed with white pine, Scotch pine, spruce and green ash. Another experiment was carried out last autumn along the main line of the Canadian Pacific railway, in the vicinity of Berthier Junction, and we expect to pursue this work vigorously next spring. As stated above, the reforestation movement is now assuming much importance and we can expect much from this policy of bringing unproductive lands again under cultivation.

**Protection from
Forest Fires**

Though the protection against forest fires does not come under our jurisdiction, I believe it to be my duty to mention here the excellent work done by my colleague, Mr. W. C. J. Hall, who, with a small staff and a small appropriation, succeeded in protecting efficiently the vast area under his care. The lumbermen must also be congratulated and we can mention with pride the excellent organizations of the St. Maurice Valley and of the Lower Ottawa which were the first of the kind in Canada.

Gentlemen, I believe I have said enough to prove to you that the forestry question has received the fullest attention from the Quebec Government. I have not the least doubt that, with the support of the authorities and the co-operation of the lumbermen, we will be able to do much more. Our province is rich in forests and in water-powers, the necessary elements for the manufacture of pulp and paper, so that we may look with confidence for a great future in that direction. But I expect also that the present cut of one billion feet from the forests under license can be increased largely, without any damage to the normality of the stands, provided certain precautions are taken; that is, provided technically trained men are employed by the limit-holders to prepare their working plans. The cut from the private lands now exceeds 800 million feet.

I think it could also be increased by judicious management and a systematic reclamation of the waste lands.

The future of forestry in Quebec is, therefore, very bright. Situated at the door of Europe, we should be able to dispute their markets with any of our former competitors. But I believe, if the reports received are correct, that before long Norway will be obliged to import pulpwood from Finland, and it is our duty to be ready when the time comes to take advantage of these new conditions.



